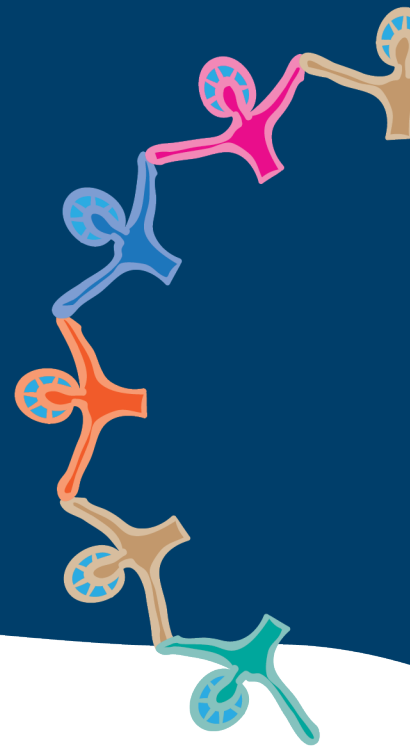


# 1800MEDICARE

## practice messaging toolkit

Ready-to-use wording to help patients find the right care, at the right time



*NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.*



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## How this pack can support your practice

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General practice is often the first-place patients turn when they are unsure what to do, especially after hours or when a health concern feels urgent but not clearly an emergency. This pack provides clear, ready-to-use wording to help practices explain what 1800MEDICARE is, where it fits, and how it can support safe care decisions. Using these materials consistently across practice touchpoints can help reinforce the message, improve visibility, and make it easier for patients to know where to turn.

### Key message

1800MEDICARE is a free, national 24/7 health advice and navigation service that helps guide patients to the next best step. It can support safer decisions when people are unsure, especially after hours or during natural disasters, service disruptions, or when usual care is harder to reach. It should be positioned as a complement to general practice and local services not a replacement. Using the same core messaging across voicemail, websites, booking pages, posters, and handouts can help patients recognise the service, feel more confident about what to do next, and support access to the right care, at the right time.

### Using this pack

Use or adapt this wording across patient-facing communications, including voicemail messages, website or booking pages, waiting room materials, after-hours messaging, and printed handouts. Repeating the same clear message in multiple places can help patients recognise the service, understand when it may help, and feel more confident about the next step.

This document is intended as a general guide only. Practices remain responsible for undertaking their own due diligence, including reviewing current Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Department guidance, and seeking independent advice where appropriate. Service details may change over time. Please refer to official guidance from the Department of Health and Aged Care and *the Australian Digital Health Agency when using this information in external materials*.

## What practices need to know

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1800MEDICARE is a free, national 24/7 health advice and navigation service that people can access by phone, website, or app. It connects people to a registered nurse, provides practical digital tools such as a symptom checker and medicines information, and helps them find the right care based on their needs. No Medicare card is needed to access the service. It can be especially useful for people in rural and remote areas, people without a regular GP, or those needing support outside usual hours.

The service provides a simple entry point into the health system and supports informed care decisions. It offers a trusted, nationally consistent source of free 24/7 advice and guidance that works alongside general practice and local health services.

## What patients need to know about 1800MEDICARE

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1800MEDICARE is a free, national 24/7 health advice and navigation service that connects patients to a registered nurse, offers advice for non-emergency health concerns, and helps them understand their care options.

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## How 1800MEDICARE can help general practice

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For practices, 1800MEDICARE can help support patients when they are unsure what to do, offer a trusted option for after-hours decisions, and potentially reduce unnecessary emergency department presentations.

Practices should position 1800MEDICARE alongside general practice and local services, not as a replacement.

### When patients may find it helpful

Patients may find 1800MEDICARE helpful when they are unsure whether they need to see a GP, need advice outside normal clinic hours, or are deciding between self-care, GP care, urgent care, or emergency care.

### Ways practices can use it

Practices can use 1800MEDICARE in after-hours voicemail messages, website and online booking information, waiting room posters or brochures, printed handouts, and general patient education messaging. Using the same wording across these touchpoints can help patients recognise the service more easily, reinforce understanding, and support continuity of message.

### Things to consider locally

Before using 1800MEDICARE in practice messaging, review existing after-hours arrangements, align messaging with local service availability, and confirm requirements with the accreditation body or assessor where needed.

**Important:** 1800MEDICARE should not be relied on as a substitute for formal after-hours provider arrangements without local review.

## Using 1800MEDICARE during disruptions or disasters

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1800MEDICARE can play an important role in supporting patients during natural disasters, service disruptions, or when usual care is harder to reach. It provides free, 24/7 access to health advice from a registered nurse and helps guide people to the right care when local services are impacted. It should be positioned as a support option that complements local services and emergency pathways, not as a replacement for them.

### How it can help

Provides 24/7 access to health advice when local services are impacted. Supports patients who are displaced, unable to contact their usual GP, or unsure what to do about a health concern. Helps guide patients to the right care based on their situation.

### Using 1800MEDICARE with My Health Record

During a disaster, access to accurate patient information is critical. If a patient seeks care outside their usual practice, treating providers may be able to access My Health Record. This can support safer prescribing, awareness of medical history and allergies, and more informed clinical decision-making.

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## Practice considerations

Encourage patients to have an active My Health Record. Keep Shared Health Summaries up to date where appropriate. Include 1800MEDICARE in after-hours messaging and disaster communication plans.

**Important:** 1800MEDICARE should be used as a support option, not a replacement for established local arrangements or emergency care pathways.

## Communicating with patients

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### Patient message (optional for use)

“If you’re not sure what to do about a health concern during this time, you can call 1800MEDICARE any time for free advice. They can help guide you to the right care.”

### Ready-to-use patient flyer

#### Need help deciding what to do?

Call 1800MEDICARE any time for free health advice from a registered nurse. If you’re not sure what to do, they can help you work out the next step. That might mean caring for yourself at home, seeing your GP, going to urgent care, or getting emergency help. 1800MEDICARE works alongside your GP and local health services. In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000).

#### Voicemail wording you can use

“If our practice is closed or services are disrupted and you need health advice, you can call 1800MEDICARE any time to speak with a registered nurse. They can talk things through with you and help you decide on the next step. If it’s an emergency, hang up and call Triple Zero (000).”

### Website and booking page copy

#### After-hours support and non-emergency care

If you’re not sure what to do about a health concern, or during natural disasters, service disruptions, or when usual care is harder to reach, you can call 1800MEDICARE any time for free advice from a registered nurse.

You’ll speak with a registered nurse who can listen, explain your options, and help you find the right care.

If it’s an emergency, call Triple Zero (000)

If you think it may be an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) straight away.

Waiting room poster text

#### Need health advice right now?

Call 1800MEDICARE for free, 24/7 advice from a registered nurse. If you’re not sure what to do about a health concern, or during natural disasters, service disruptions, or when usual care is harder to reach, they can listen, explain your options, and help you work out the next step. 1800MEDICARE works alongside your GP and local health services. In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000).

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## Newsletter and stakeholder copy

### Supporting safe care navigation for patients

1800MEDICARE is a free, national 24/7 health advice and navigation service that supports patients when they are unsure what to do next, including during natural disasters, service disruptions, or when usual care is harder to reach, helping connect them to the right care, at the right time.

Practices can use this messaging in after-hours and non-emergency communications to support patients, reinforce local care pathways, and provide a more consistent message across practice touchpoints, including when local services are disrupted.

It works alongside general practice and local services to support safe care decisions.

### Staff talking points

Staff can explain that 1800MEDICARE gives patients another way to access trusted advice, especially after hours or when they are unsure what to do. Practices can tailor the messaging to suit their local context and should use it consistently across common patient touchpoints to build recognition and support continuity.

### Messaging dos and don'ts

✔ Always use phrases such as “supports general practice”, “guides patients on what to do next”, and “24/7 advice and navigation”.

✘ Avoid phrases that suggest it replaces GPs, replaces after-hours services, or provides care directly, because it provides advice and navigation.

➡ The focus is on keeping messaging practical and easy to use, supporting patients while minimising disruption to existing workflows.

If you would like more information or support tailoring this messaging for your local context, please contact the PCE team at [pce@nqphn.com.au](mailto:pce@nqphn.com.au).



## Printable handout

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A range of resources are available from 1800MEDICARE for you and your practice to use. These resources are free of charge and include accurate, up to date information.

Resources such as social media tiles, videos, fact sheets and assets are also available, including materials designed to support engagement with First Nations communities.

Additional resources can be accessed at [nqphn.com.au](http://nqphn.com.au).

- [Posters](#)
- [Social media tiles](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [First Nations](#)
- [Fact sheets](#)



## Printable disaster-ready page

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### If usual services are disrupted

1800MEDICARE is a free, national 24/7 health advice and navigation service. If your usual GP, pharmacy, or local health service is closed, harder to reach, or affected by a natural disaster or service disruption, you can call 1800MEDICARE any time to speak with a registered nurse. They can listen, explain your options, and help guide you to the right care.

### What you can do

- Call **1800 633 422** any time for free advice from a registered nurse.
- If you need help finding care, ask about local GP, pharmacy, urgent care, or hospital options.
- Keep your medicines, scripts, and important health information with you if you need to leave home quickly.
- If your usual service is unavailable, use the 1800MEDICARE website or app for health information and practical tools.

### Keep your health information handy

If you have one, make sure your My Health Record is active and your important health details are up to date. This may help treating providers access information such as medicines, allergies, and medical history if you need care away from your usual practice.

#### **1800MEDICARE contact details**

##### **Call 1800 633 422**


Free health advice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Website:** [medicare.gov.au/1800](https://www.medicare.gov.au/1800)

**In an emergency:** Call Triple Zero (000)

*This page is intended for general information only and should be used alongside local emergency instructions and available health services.*

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## Extra support options for patients in Queensland, rural and remote areas

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Patients in Queensland, including those living in rural and remote areas, may sometimes need extra support outside their usual GP or local health service, especially after hours, during service disruptions, or when care is harder to access. The services below may help with trusted health advice, emergency support, crisis support, and access to important health information when it is needed.

### 1800MEDICARE (1800 633 422)

- Free, national 24/7 health advice and navigation service.
- Patients can speak with a registered nurse any time for trusted health information and advice.
- Helps patients decide the most appropriate next step, including self-care, GP, urgent care, pharmacy, or emergency care.
- Supports access to Medicare services and digital tools, including symptom checking, medicines information, electronic prescriptions, and Active Script List.
- Useful when GP clinics or urgent care options are closed or harder to reach.
- For emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

### 1300 MY RFDS (1300 697 337) – Royal Flying Doctor Service

- 24-hour medical consultation support for regional, rural, and remote Queensland.
- Can support remote emergencies, urgent telehealth advice, and situations where local hospital services are not available.
- May assist with aeromedical retrieval and medical support until in-person help arrives.
- Useful for people living, working, or travelling in remote areas with limited access to hospital services.
- For emergencies in areas without local hospital access, call 1300 MY RFDS. In all other areas, call Triple Zero (000).

### 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) – Queensland Health

- Confidential 24/7 phone advice line for people in Queensland.
- Patients can speak directly with a registered nurse for symptom assessment, health advice, and referral guidance.
- Can help guide next steps, including self-care, GP review, urgent care, or emergency department attendance.
- Supports safe decision-making after hours or when people are unsure what to do.
- For emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

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## National 24/7 crisis support services

- Lifeline – 13 11 14 (online chat available).
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 (online chat available).
- 13YARN – 13 92 76.

## My Health Record

- My Health Record is a secure online summary of key health information.
- It may include pathology and diagnostic imaging reports, prescription and dispensing information, hospital discharge summaries, immunisations, allergies, medicines, and other information uploaded by healthcare providers.
- Patients can also view key health information through the 1800MEDICARE app if their My Health Record is linked.
- Having up-to-date information available can support continuity and coordination of care across services, especially during emergencies, disasters, or when seeing a provider outside the usual practice.

## Key messages

- Call Triple Zero (000) for a life-threatening emergency.
- Call 1800MEDICARE or 13 HEALTH for health advice and help deciding what to do next.
- Call 1300 MY RFDS if you are in a remote or rural area without local hospital access and need urgent medical support.
- My Health Record can support care decisions by making key health information easier to access and share with healthcare providers when needed.

## Further information

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### Quick links

Here are a few helpful links for practices wanting to learn more about 1800MEDICARE, check approved wording, and access ready-made resources for websites, waiting rooms, voicemail, and other patient communication touchpoints.

Patient and practice links:

Main service page: [medicare.gov.au/1800](https://www.medicare.gov.au/1800)

Consumer resources: [1800medicare.gov.au/resources](https://www.1800medicare.gov.au/resources)

Health professional resources: [1800medicare.gov.au/health-professionals](https://www.1800medicare.gov.au/health-professionals)

Stakeholder Information Kit: [1800medicare.gov.au/resources/stakeholder-kit](https://www.1800medicare.gov.au/resources/stakeholder-kit)

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## Official source pages:

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### Department of Health and Aged Care

[1800MEDICARE – Department of Health and Aged Care](#)

[1800MEDICARE contact page](#)

[1800MEDICARE app/tool page](#)

[New 1800MEDICARE offers free, 24/7 health advice anywhere in Australia](#)

### Healthdirect Australia

[Promotional materials hub](#)

[Marketing resources](#)

[Social media and online assets](#)

[healthdirect \(1800MEDICARE\)](#)

[Primary Health Networks Information Hub](#)

[Multi-language health resources](#)

Checking these sources first can help practices tailor local messaging with confidence.

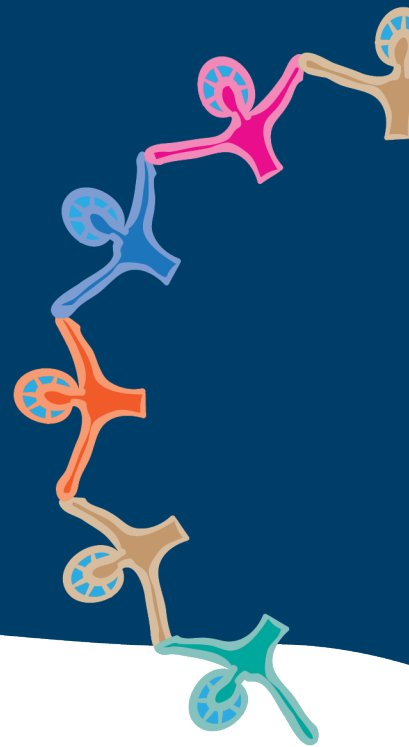
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# phn

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

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